

WESTERN SHIELD – 'IT'S THE WAY TO GO'

Vincent Serventy—renowned environmentalist and considered by many to be the “father of conservation in Australia”—made a fleeting return to his native Western Australia recently and was both ‘pleasantly surprised’ and ‘extremely pleased’ with the drive to restore the State’s natural biodiversity.

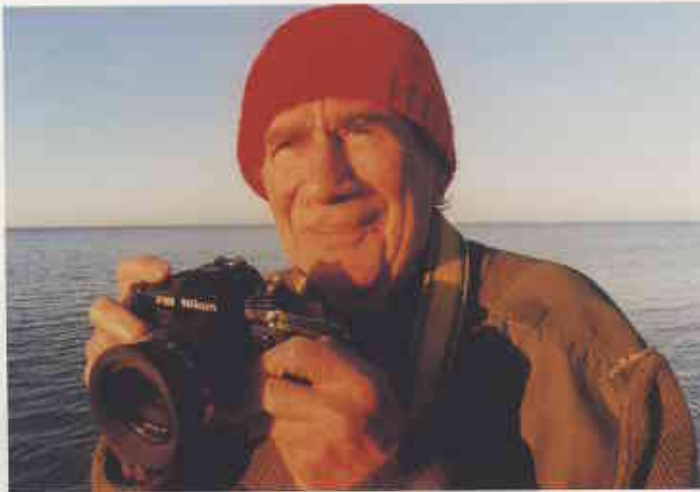
‘Vin’ Serventy has spent more than 50 years championing conservation. His efforts have been recognised through numerous national and international conservation awards and achievements, including a Member of the Order of Australia.

LANDSCOPE readers will be familiar with ‘Vin’. He has been among the magazine’s most ardent letter-writers, providing balanced commentary on many articles carried over the years.

His whirlwind visit to WA saw him take in a tightly scheduled three-day tour of the magnificent natural attractions in the World Heritage Listed Shark Bay area, in particular the fauna conservation work being done by CALM on Peron Peninsula under *Project Eden*. What he found was beyond his expectations.

“It was exciting to see this work, everything was as good as the literature and articles I had read,” he said. “It is an excellent project run by very dedicated people who use a range of ingenious methods to control feral animals.

“The trapping runs, animal releases and breeding programs on the peninsula are quite impressive. What staggered me the most was project’s eradication of predators. They (CALM) got



rid of goats, rabbits and foxes and built a fence to stop them from coming back on to the peninsula. They use this marvelous barking dog device over the grid-way near the entry to the fence.

“What excited me the most was the research into controlling feral cats. You can control foxes, but cats have been much harder. I am excited about this work as cats are much more choosy over baits.

“The whole thing is very impressive, including the way they (CALM) manage the dolphins at Monkey Mia. The area now has so many eco-tourism attractions, which is the way to go. I understand tourists are staying longer in

the area now to view the native wildlife conservation methods.”

He well remembers the times, 50 years ago, when Denham was a one-pub town with a few shops. “Now the place has almost every type of thing conceivable - resorts, restaurants and more shops,” he said.

‘Vin’ also looked at the progress being made with *Western Shield*, CALM’s overall initiative to bring native animal species back from the brink of extinction by controlling introduced predators on five million hectares of WA’s conservation estate.

“It’s massive,” he said, adding that as a Western

Top: Renowned naturalist Vincent Serventy.

Below left: Vincent Serventy participating in feeding the dolphins at Monkey Mia in the World Heritage Listed Shark Bay.

Photos – Kerry Berrington, courtesy Sunday Times

Australian born, he was quite proud that the State was leading the nation. “New South Wales has begun to implement an Eastern Shield project based on *Western Shield*,” he said. “Though *Western Shield* is expensive (around \$1 million a year), it is well received and needed. It’s the way to go—get everyone involved including private landholders; everyone should go green.”

Western Shield will be a part of the opening day of the Earth 2000 international conference the Wildlife Preservation Society is organising in Sydney. The conference aims to stimulate worldwide interest in conserving wildlife and provide a conservation blueprint for the first years of the new millennium.

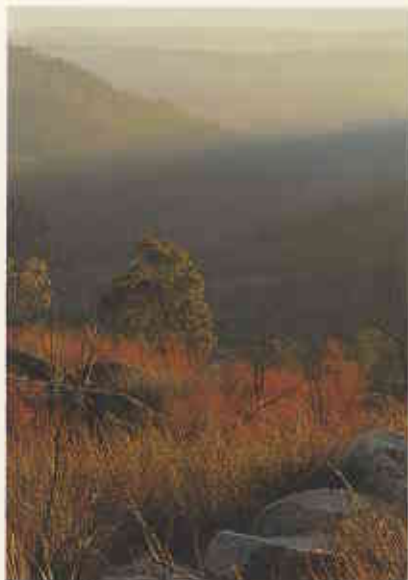
“CALM’s work on controlling feral animals is recognised in many parts of the world and we hope from this conference other States will be encouraged to follow suit,” he said.

With more than 60 books published on wildlife, the environment and conservation, and his significant contribution to environmental education, WA is indeed fortunate to have this important naturalist support and recognise the innovative conservation work being done in this State.

LANDSCOPE

054919

VOLUME FOURTEEN NUMBER 2, SUMMER 1998-1999



This land, where the Avon River cuts through the Darling Range, was home to WA's most notorious bushranger. His story is on page 10.



Just when everyone thought it was extinct, this small mammal suddenly reappeared. See 'Dibblers' on page 28.



100,000 hectares of bluegums by the year 2000. Was it a realistic target? See 'From Blue sky to Blue Chip' on page 35.



'What about the Animals', on page 21, discusses early findings from the Kingston Study.



'Karla Wongi: Fire Talk', on page 48, is a Nyungar perspective on the use of fire in the south-west of WA.

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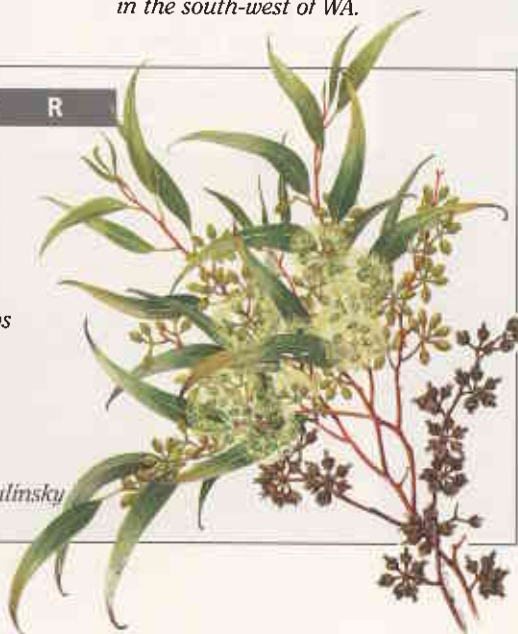
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One of Western Australia's best-known woodlands may be under threat now, but research by CALMScience Division staff is playing a key role in safeguarding their future. See 'Small Steps to Save Salmon Gums', on page 17

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Published by Dr S Shea, Executive Director
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 50 Hayman Road, Como, Western Australia